

Message Text

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ACTION AID-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 IO-10 EB-07 L-02 CIAE-00 INR-05

NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 COME-00 OMB-01 SR-02 ORM-01

AGR-05 SWF-01 CIEP-01 SS-15 NSC-05 IGA-01 DODE-00

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R 160245Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1811

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECRP, LA

SUBJ: CERP 0008 - EVALUATION OF UN ASSISTANCE

PROGRAMS

REF: (A) STATE 253227

(B) VIENTIANE 2621

SUMMARY: IN LAOS THERE HAS BEEN MINIMUM
FORMAL COORDINATION OF PLANNING DOCUMENTATION
BETWEEN UNDP PLANNERS AND OTHER AID DONORS
BECAUSE OF ADHERENCE TO PGNU IMPLIED RESTRICTIONS
AGAINST COORDINATION. INFORMAL DISUSSIONS AT THE
PRE-PLANNING LEVEL HAVE OCCURRED. IN ABSENCE
OF LAO NATIONAL PLAN, UNDP PROGRAM HAS RESPONDED
TO GUIDANCE FROM COMMISSION-GENERAL OF PLAN
(CGP).

ASSUME YOU HAVE UNDP PLAN DOCUMENT
DP/GC/LAO/R.2, DATED 18 JULY 1974. FOLLOWING TEXT
KEYED TO ALPHANUMERIC DESIGNATION OF QUESTIONS
IN REF. A BUT DOES NOT REPEAT QUESTIONS.
QUESTION (1). COUNTRY BACKGROUND PAPER IN FRENCH
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DATED FEBRUARY 1974 INCLUDES GOOD SECTORAL ANA-

LYSIS. EARLIER EDITION THIS PAPER IN ENGLISH CONTAINED MANY ERRORS AND WAS COMPLETELY REWRITTEN FOR FRENCH VERSION, OF WHICH THERE IS NO ENGLISH TRANSLATION. COPIES IN ENGLISH, IF AVAILABLE, SHOULD BE DESTROYED.

QUESTION (2). IN LAOS, COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT COMPREHENSIVE COUNTRY PROGRAM WERE NOT SOUGHT FROM US OR OTHER DONORS. THIS NOT NECESSARILY DUE TO UNDP LACK OF DESIRE TO COORDINATE BUT WAS DUE (ACCORDING TO RESPONSIBLE UNDP OFFICIAL) TO IMPLIED RESTRICTIONS BY PGNU COMMISSION GENERAL OF PLAN (CGP) AGAINST UNDP COORDINATION WITH BILATERAL AID DONORS. SOME UNDP PROJECTS INCLUDE OTHER DONOR INPUTS IN WHICH CASES INFORMAL TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS ARE HELD. OCCASIONAL FORMAL MEETINGS ARE CHAIRED BY CGP FOR SPECIFIC PROJECTS DEVELOPMENT.

QUESTION (3). A. AT TIME UNDP PROGRAM FINALIZED (APRIL, 1974) PGNU DID NOT HAVE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN NOR DOES IT AT THIS TIME ALTHOUGH PRELIMINARY DRAFTS HAVE BEEN PREPARED. IN MAY, THE NEWLY CONSTITUTED JOINT POLITICAL COUNCIL PRESENTED 18 POINTS OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY FOR CONSIDERATION BY PGNU. ADHERENCE TO THESE POINTS WOULD CHANGE SOMEWHAT THE PRIORITIES ADOPTED BY THE UNDP PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH CGP GUIDANCE. HOWEVER, THE UNDP PROGRAM RECOGNIZED THIS POSSIBILITY AND DID NOT PROGRAM 32 PER CENT (\$3.7 MILLION) OF THE FIVE-YEAR PROPOSED FUNDING. SINCE TRANSMITTAL OF THE PLAN TO UN NEW YORK, AN ADDITIONAL \$2.0 MILLION (APPROX) HAS BEEN PROGRAMED. DETAILS WILL BE AVAILABLE NEXT WEEK AND WILL THEN BE CABLED.

ORIGINAL UNDP PROGRAM DOES NOT ADDRESS EFFECTIVELY THE PRIORITIES STATED IN PREAMBLE TO ITS OWN PROGRAM, NAMELY REFUGEE REINSTALLATION, INFRASTRUCTURE RECONSTRUCTION, AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT. HALF OF PROGRAM IS DEVOTED TO TRAINING AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT; 12 PER CENT TO INFRASTRUCTURE; THE REMAINDER IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ROUGHLY EQUAL PARTS TO AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, INDUSTRY, HEALTH, AND GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES. HOWEVER, SINCE ONE OF MOST SERIOUS OBSTACLES TO DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN LACK OF MANAGERIAL MANPOWER, WELL-DESIGNED TRAINING PROJECTS COULD PROVIDE VALUABLE SUPPORT FOR THE ENTIRE DEVELOPMENT EFFORT.

IN FACT, HOWEVER, THREE OF THE PLANNED TRAINING

PROJECTS (CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL RE-TRAINING, RURAL CENTERS FOR AGRICULTURAL AND ARTISAN TRAINING AND ACCELERATED TRAINING OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES) TOTALING \$1.3 MILLION, ARE POORLY PLANNED AND WOULD HAVE BENEFITED BY CONSULTATION IN PRE-PLANNING PHASE WITH USAID EDUCATION AND MANPOWER TECHNICIANS WHO HAVE HAD SPECIFIC EXPERIENCE IN THESE ACTIVITIES. Q.(3). B. ALTHOUGH THE HIGH PRIORITY NOW ACCORDED AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT BY PGNU WAS NOT

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SPECIFICALLY EMPHASIZED, MUCH OF PROGRAM CONTRIBUTES TO THIS END. IN ADDITION, SOME OF NEWLY ALLOCATED UNDP FUNDS INCREASE THE SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURE, AS DOES \$0.25 MILLION RECENTLY ALLOCATED FROM SPECIAL \$1.0 MILLION LAO PORTION OF SPECIAL FUND FOR LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. THIS PROJECT WAS COORDINATED WITH OTHER AID DONORS. ON THE WHOLE, THE PROGRAM ATTEMPTS TO RESPOND TO SO MANY CGP-ENUNCIATED NEEDS THAT SOME PROJECTS OPERATE BELOW AN EFFECTIVE LEVEL OF UTILITY WITH RESULT THAT (1) PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS MAY NOT BE WORTH THE EXPENDITURES AND (2) OTHER AID DONORS ARE EITHER PRECLUDED FROM MOUNTING EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS IN THESE AREAS OR THEIR PROGRAMS COMPETE

OR OVERLAP THOSE OF UNDP. EXAMPLES OF (1) ARE THE PROJECTS FOR SOILS INVENTORY, REGIONAL PLANNING, AND ASSISTANCE TO STATISTICAL SERVICE.

Q.(3)C. UNDP HAS SOMETIMES INITIATED DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHER DONORS AT THE PRE-PLANNING STAGE OF PROJECT DEVELOPMENT IN AN INFORMAL MANNER. IN OTHER CASES, DONOR TECHNICIANS HAVE INITIATED CONSULTATION WHEN OVERLAP OR CONFLICT APPEARED IMMINENT. BOTH PROCEDURES, AND ESPECIALLY COMPREHENSIVE COORDINATION, HAVE BEEN DISCOURAGED

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BY THE PGNU. ACCORDING TO THE UNDP OFFICIAL, A RECENT ATTEMPT TO DISCUSS THE OVERALL AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM WITH USAID AFTER GENERAL AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED WITH THE PGNU WAS SHARPLY CRITICIZED BY THE PGNU.

AS STATED REF. B, ONLY FORMAL ATTEMPT AT COORDINATION OF ENTIRE PROGRAM WAS DURING MEETING OF 5-6 MARCH 1974. AS RESULT OF INHIBITIONS AGAINST DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN DONORS, THERE IS PROBABLE OVERLAP IN FORESTRY ACTIVITIES (WITH CANADIAN AND AUSTRALIAN AID), WITH MINING DEVELOPMENT (WITH CANADIAN AID), SOCIAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (WITH UNICEF AND USAID).

Q.(3)D. UNDP RESREP HAS WORKED CLOSELY WITH CGP IN ALL PLANNING BUT IN ISOLATION FROM OTHER AID DONORS. ALTHOUGH UNDP DEVISED NINE-STEP PLANNING PROCEDURE, ONLY ONE STEP INVOLVED COORDINATION WITH OTHER AID DONORS AND IN ACTUALITY PERMITTED NO REAL COOPERATION. AS REPORTED REF. B, A RECENT ATTEMPT BY UNDP TO ESTABLISH ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS AMONG DONORS WERE AGAIN DISCOURAGED BY PGNU.

HOWEVER, UNDP AND CGP CLOSE COOPERATION IS EVIDENCED BY RECENT NEW ALLOCATION OF PART OF RESIDUAL \$3.5 MILLION IN SUPPORT OF AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION OBJECTIVES NOW BEING CLARIFIED BY PGNU.

Q.(3)E. MISSION NOT AWARE OF EVALUATION TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED BY UNDP BUT BELIEVES TENDENCY EXISTS TO CONTINUE MARGINALLY EFFECTIVE PROJECTS WHILE CHANGING PERSONNEL WHOSE PERFORMANCE CONSIDERED INADEQUATE BY PGNU. HOWEVER, AT LEAST ONE INEFFECTIVE PROJECT HAS BEEN DISCONTINUED (UNESCO PROJECT LAO/71/504) AND RESCHEDULED FOR 1978-79 WHEN EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT WILL BE MORE SUITABLE (CYCLE OF PEDAGOGICAL RESEARCH). FOUR OF LAST YEAR'S WHO PROJECTS ARE REMOVED FROM UNDP FUNDING AND ARE CONTINUING UNDER WHO FUNDING.

Q.(3)F. USAID BELIEVES TASKS FOR CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING SHOULD BE DIVIDED AMONG EXISTING TECHNICAL SCHOOLS, THEREBY OBLIVIATING THE CONFIDENTIAL OFFICIAL USE

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SION THAT HAS PRESUMABLY HELD BACK DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PROJECT. ALSO BELIEVE RURAL CENTERS FOR AGRICULTURAL AND ARTISAN TRAINING SHOULD USE NON-FORMAL TRAINING TECHNIQUES INSTEAD THOSE NOW PLANNED. SEMINARS OF 50 PERSONS AS PLANNED FOR ACCELERATED TRAINING OF GOVERNMENT WORKERS BELIEVED HIGHLY IMPRACTICAL FOLLOWING MUCH EXPERIENCE THESE TECHNIQUES. BOTH USAID AND WHO BELIEVE ENTRANCE STANDARDS FOR NURSES TRAINING COURSES TOO HIGH BUT CANNOT CONVINCE PGNU.

Q.(3)G. ONLY PROJECT DIRECTLY INVOLVING WOMEN IS NURSES TRAINING IN WHICH NUMBER AVAILABLE CANDIDATES REDUCED BY REQUIRING TEN YEARS PREVIOUS EDUCATION FOR RN CANDIDATES AND EIGHT FOR AUXILIARY NURSE CANDIDATES INSTEAD OF EIGHT AND SIX YEARS DEEMED ADEQUATE BY WHO AND USAID PUBLIC HEALTH.

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